

SOUTH ASIA FACULTY GROUP COMMENT ON DR. RAVI RAJAN EDITS

1. Comment 2396, Chapter 10, Gr 6, page 191, lines 380- 382: The current text is accurate. The suggestion by the South Asia faculty group makes no historical sense because Pakistan did not come in to being until 1947. A compromise could simply be: “the Indus valley in the Indian sub-continent.”

We well understand the date of Pakistan’s origin; our attempt in suggesting this edit is to recognize that an interested and curious 6<sup>th</sup> grade might well go to a map search for the Indus civilization in India and not realize that most of it is in present-day Pakistan. We find the attempt by interested parties to eliminate reference to Pakistan at appropriate places of the framework to be motivate by more than scholarly concerns. However, the compromise edit is acceptable to the committee.

2. Comment 2436, Chapter 10, Gr 6, page 210, lines 774: Again, “South Asia” is a modern artifact, an attempt to recognize modern nation state configurations in a geographical region of the world. If the state textbooks decide to adopt the method of organizing based on modern political configurations, it should do so consistently. For example, China should be referred to as East Asia, or as PRC and Taiwan. Ultimately, this makes no historical sense and will lead to an unnecessary redux. I propose the same compromise that I made in comment 1, i.e., use “the Indian sub-continent” instead of “India” or “South Asia.” That way, fidelity to history is preserved.

We well understand that South Asia is a “modern artifact” (and agree that it would be better if many of the sections on China referred to “East Asia” though this is out of our purview). Again the aim is to ensure accurate ease of reference for 6<sup>th</sup> graders learning about geographical regions; the contextual significance of the edit has to be foregrounded rather than strict historical fidelity. However, the suggested compromise edit is acceptable to the committee.

3. Comment 2439, Chapter 10, Gr 6, page 210, line 777: I would like to propose: “the spiritual belief systems of Ancient India.” There were many systems, as opposed to one singular religion.

The committee agrees that this is a better formulation and endorses this suggestion.

4. Comment 2441, Chapter 10, Gr 6, page 210, line 783: Again, for reasons advanced in Comment 2, I propose retaining consistency and using the phrase: “Indian sub-continent” instead of either “India” or “South Asia.”

Again the aim is to ensure accurate ease of reference for 6<sup>th</sup> graders learning about geographical regions; the contextual significance of the edit has to be foregrounded, so we feel that our edit works better: “In this unit students learn about ancient societies in South Asia.” However, the compromise edit is acceptable.

5. Comment 2454, Chapter 10, Gr 6, Page 211, lines 811-812: Again, for reasons advanced in Comment 2, I propose retaining consistency and using the phrase: “Indian sub-continent” instead of either “India” or “South Asia.”

While consistency is desirable, South Asia is preferable since it may not be understood that Afghanistan, a part of the Indus civilization is a part of the Indian subcontinent. We feel our edit works better: “A flourishing urban civilization developed in South Asia from as early as 3300 BCE along the Indus River.”

6. Comment 2459, Chapter 10, Gr 6, Page 212, lines 819-821: I would like to propose the following changes: “The Indian sub-continent experienced a Vedic period (ca. 1500-500 BCE), named for the Vedas which were composed in Sanskrit. While Sanskrit texts, comprising a wide range of topics, including spiritual, cultural, health, science and technology, continued to be produced in subsequent centuries, texts in Old Tamil also began to appear around 300 BCE, and Tamil literary production flourished during the Sangam period in South India in following centuries. Sanskrit and Tamil texts passed on for generations through complex oral and written traditions. ”

Again, we think South Asia may an easier term of reference for 6<sup>th</sup> graders, but use of “Indian sub-continent” is acceptable.

7. Comment 2501, Chapter 10, Gr 6, Page 214, lines 860-864: I do not see the point in the South Asia faculty group's proposed changes. The current text is accurate. The concept of spiritual diversity did develop during this period. "Hinduism" did not and does not comprise of a single doctrine, but a wide panoply of beliefs and practices, often in critical conversations and disagreements with each other. If there is anything I'd change, it is to replace "religion" with "spiritual."

The current draft language which has "profound acceptance of religious diversity" leaves the impression that there was no disagreement and even violence between sects that disagreed. If there had been profound acceptance of religious diversity during this period, Buddhism would not have emerged as a religion.

8. Comment 2502, Chapter 10, Page 214, lines 866-867: I propose the following change: "Ancient societies of the Indian sub-continent formed into groups, jatis, that emphasized birth as the defining criteria." This change is for consistency. One can't have South Asia in some places and India or Indian in others without good reason. I propose a standard, consistent usage, "Indian sub-continent."

Again, we felt the context of the edit is more important than consistency which we feel will be difficult to achieve in the current draft framework—the concern in this edit was to remove "self-governing" as the modifier for groups. However, "Ancient societies of the Indian sub-continent" while awkward, is accurate and acceptable.

9. Comment 2511, Chapter 10, Page 214, lines 872-874: Both texts -- the current one and the suggested change, are sweeping generalizations. I suggest the following: "A person belonged to a particular varna for a variety of reasons which varied across the geography of the Indian sub-continent over time. These reasons primarily entailed birth, although they also included professional excellence and good conduct."

We believe our edit, "A person belonged to a particular varna not just by his professional excellence and his good conduct, but mainly by birth" is economical and accurate. However we have no issue with the suggested edit though it is wordier.

10. Comment 2536, Chapter 10, Page 215, lines 891-892: Both texts are inaccurate and over-generalize. Instead, I suggest the following: "Teachers should make clear to students that this was a social and cultural structure as well as dogma perpetrated by dominant groups including priests."

Again, we believe our edit, "Teachers should make clear to students that this was a social and cultural structure as well as a religious belief." is economical and accurate, but we have no objection to this suggested wording.

11. Comment 2545, Chapter 10, Page 215, lines 896-897: Again, both the current text and the proposed revision over-generalize. I propose the following: “They participated in religious ceremonies and festival celebrations. The relative equality between the genders varied from one region of the Indian sub- continent to another, and across time. There were also instances of matriarchy, although this did not necessarily entail equality.”

Dr. Rajan is neither a premodern or feminist scholar, nor an anthropologist. There are no recorded instances of “matriarchal” societies though the term exists in popular and outdated scholarly usage. The suggested edit is unnecessarily wordy and confusing for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. The intent of our edit was to underscore that there was no gender equality in this period (and it is debatable whether it exists anywhere today).

12. Comment 2545, Chapter 10, Page 215, lines 909-910: replace South Asia” with “Indian sub- continent” in the suggested change text.

13. Comment 2593, Chapter 10, Page 235, lines 63-65: replace South Asia” with “Indian sub- continent” in the suggested change text.

Our suggested edit “Neither of the meanings of “medieval” – “middle” or “backward and primitive” – are useful for periodizing world history, or the histories of China, South Asia, Southeast Asia, or Mesoamerica.” makes better sense, since Southeast Asia and Mesoamerica are also given in the framework as regions. ‘Indian sub- continent’ does not necessarily include places like Myanmar, Tibet or Afghanistan. East Asia would also be better than China” in this sentence, but that is beyond our purview.

14. Comment 2601, Chapter 10, Page 239, lines 145-147: replace South Asia” with “Indian sub- continent” in the suggested change text.

This is acceptable.

15. Comment 2696, Chapter 10, Page 258, lines 559-560: replace South Asia” with “Indian sub- continent” in the suggested change text.

The draft language uses a mix of countries and regions, so the substitution of South Asia for Indian in our edit, “The city’s culture was a mix of Arab, Persian, South Asian, Turkish, and Central Asian culture.” is not out of place. More importantly, the overall context of the edits defines our usage here and is meant to guard against the tendency to conflate India with Hinduism in the draft framework, since the mix of Muslim practices and traditions w/Hindu and other cultural traditions of South Asia with Arab, Persian, Turkish and Central Asian cultures is what is being emphasized.

16. Comment 2706, Chapter 10, Page 260, lines 590-593: There is no hard evidence that sufi saints inspired anyone to convert. Conversion was not their project. They were spiritual seekers, not proselytizers. I propose the following change: “Sufi saints and teachers combined local and Islamic traditions, and inspired common people on the frontier areas of the Muslim world – east Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Indian sub continent.”

17. Comment 2730, Chapter 10, Page 265, lines 692-695: The extant texts are both random and haphazard. I propose the following: “Enduring contributions of the cultures and civilizations of the Indian subcontinent to other areas of Afroeurasia include breakthroughs in number theory and, especially, the concept of zero; logical and inferential systems, and linguistic and grammatical theory, the game of chess, the cotton textile industry, the technology of crystalizing sugar, astronomical treatises, the practice of monasticism, and the art, architecture, and performing arts of the Classical Age.”

Again, the context of this sentence drives our suggestion to use South Asia here, which is less awkward and consistent with the use of Afroearasia in the sentence. We feel our original edit is best: “Enduring contributions of South Asian culture and civilization to other areas of Afroeurasia include the cotton textile industry, the technology of crystalizing sugar, astronomical treatises, the practice of monasticism, the game of chess, and the art, architecture, and performing arts of the Classical Age.”

18. Comment 2734, Chapter 10, Page 265, lines 703-704: Again: change “the religion of ancient India” to “the spiritual traditions of ancient India.”

We have no objection to this edit, although “questioned” may work better than “critiqued”.

19. Comment 2734, Page 265, lines 707-709: Both texts have germs of truth in them. I suggest the following: “The Bhakti movement placed emphasis on social and religious equality and a personal expression of devotion to God in the popular, vernacular languages. It also critiqued the power held by priestly elites.”

We have no objection to this edit.

20. Comment 2740, Page 266, lines 715-717: replace South Asia” with “Indian sub-continent” in the suggested change text.

21.

Again, the context of this sentence drives our suggestion to use South Asia here, which is less awkward, and consistent with the use of the geographic regions of Central and Southeast Asia in the original. We feel our original edit is best: “Students next examine this question: **How did monks, nuns, merchants, travelers, and empires from South Asia spread religious ideas and practices and cultural styles of art and architecture to Central and Southeast Asia?**”

22. Comment 2748, Page 267, lines 740-742: Again, the SA faculty comment makes no historical sense. I propose simply replacing “India” in the current text, with “the Indian sub-continent.”

Our context-driven edit, “Either here, or in the China unit, students trace the journey of Xuanzang, who departed from China in 627 CE on pilgrimage to Buddhist holy sites in present day Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Nepal” Is intended to help 6<sup>th</sup> grader understand that the “Indian-subcontinent” includes the modern day countries of the region which are rarely mentioned since both scholarship and the several suggested edits are so “India-centric.”

23. Comment 2813, 11 (gr 7), Page 297, lines 1371-1373 (bold in original): “Next students investigate the question: Why did the Europeans use colonialism to interact with Native Americans and peoples of Africa, and Asia? What were the effects of colonialism on the colonized people?”

We agree the original language and our edit is awkward; perhaps this would work better: “Why did the europeans try to colonize and exploit native americans and many south and east asian peoples that they interacted with? What were the effects of colonialism on the colonized peoples?”

24. Comment 2993, 14 (gr 9), Page 405, lines 455-458: The Quran should indeed be added, but the distinction between scriptural and literary texts is hair splitting and un-necessary for this grade.

25. Comment 3192, 15 (Gr 10), Pages 498-499, lines 1484-1487: Both versions are needlessly inflammatory. Instead, I propose the following: “Violence perpetrated in the name of religion all over the world has tended to tear apart societies and civilizations. Those who invoke religion to perpetrate violence often turn inward, turning upon members of their own faith who disagree on some tenets, even whilst attacking those from religions other than their own.”

This edit is acceptable if the Current text: “Anti-Western violence perpetrated by the followers of a fundamentalist version of Islam has contributed to the appearance of deep conflict between the Islamic and Western worlds, especially since 9/11.” is deleted.